Freedom of Press in Jeopardy In Uttar Pradesh

1169. SHRI K.M. KHAN: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Lucknow office of Hindi fortnightly magazine "Maya' has been threatened to be ransacked and set on fire by certain responsible persons of country during last week of June, 1996;

(b) to achieve the mission, such responsible persons had visited the office of the magazine in Gopala Apartments at Lucknow on 26th June, 1996;

(c) if such behaviour puts the freedom of Press in jeopardy;

(d) the action taken to provide full security coverage to magazine's office and its officials;

(e) whether any action has been taken against the culprits; and

(f) if so, details thereof and if not, reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR): (a) to (f) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Deaths in Accidents on National Highways in Gujarat

1170. SHRI BRAHMA KUMAR BHATT: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of persons killed in road accidents in Gujarat, each year during the last five years;

(b) the number killed in road accidents on National Highways and State Highways;

(c) the number of accidents each year on the National Highway between Ahmedabad and Mumbai; and

(d) the programmes and. progress of widening of roads and resurfacing of National Highway in Gujarat for preventing road accidents?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T. G. VENKATR-AMAN): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Expenses Incurred for Taring Road

1171. SHRI JOY NADUKKARA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the expenses for taring 1 Km. of road;

(b) the durability of roads after taring is done;

(c) whether there is any provision to penalise the contractor and engineers; and

(d) whether Government propose to have a permanent system of maintenance of the roads?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T. G. VENKAT-RAMAN): (a) and (b) The term 'Taring' is not used on National Highways. The Hon'ble Member, perhaps, desires to know the expenses being incurred on the periodic renwal of National Highways which is approximately Rs. 3.00 to 4.00 lakhs per Km. for a two-lane wide carriageway treated with 20 mm thick Premix Carpet including Seal Coat/Mix Seal surfacing. The durability of roads after periodic renewal varies from 3 to 5 years depending upon various factors like, composition of pavement, intensity of traffic and climatic conditions.

(c) Yes, Sir. The construction work is done as per prescribed specifications and in accordance with State PWD Manuals which *inter-alia* provide for penalty clauses.

(d) There is a system for maintenance of roads with the State PWDs who are doing the work of National Highways for the Government of India on agency basis. However, maintenance is a continuous process and the National Highways are being maintained in traffic-worthy condition within the available resources.

अनु.जातियों/अनु. जनजातियों के राजनयिक

1172. श्री मूलचन्द मीणा: क्या विदेश मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) अनुसूचित जाति और अनुसूचित जनजाति के कुल कितने राजदूत/उच्चायुक्त और राज्यपाल हैं; और

(ख) उपर्युक्त पदों पर नियुक्ति संबंधी क्या मानदंड अपनाए जाते हैं?

विदेश मंत्री (श्री इन्द्र कुमार गुजराल): (क) और (ख) राजदूतों/हाई कमिश्नरों/राज्यपालों की नियुक्ति उनकी उपयुक्तता, उनके अनुभव और श्रेष्ठता के आधार पर की जाती है न कि जाति या समुदाय के आधार पर राज्यपालों की नियुक्ति अथवा उनके वैयक्तिक विवरण का संबंध इस मंत्रालय से नहीं है। जहां तक वृत्तिक राजदूतों/हाई कमिश्नरों का प्रश्न है उनमें से तेरह अनुसूचित जातियों से तथा सात अनुसूचित जनजातियों के हैं।

LITE Activity in Tamil Nadu

1173. DR. D. MASTHAN: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that LTTE is active again on Rameshwaram Coast in Tamil Nadu;

(b) whether Government are aware of the Reports about LTTE smugglers nexus along the southern coastal line of Tamil Nadu; and

(c) the steps Government have taken to contain terrorist activities in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR): (a) There is no confirmed information suggestive of LTTE having become active on Rameshwaram Coast.

(b) Yes, Sir. Some incidents of Indian fishermen transporting contraband items for the use of LTTE have come to notice.

(c) The Central and State Govemments are taking coordinated action to prevent any illegal activities by Sri Lankan militants. Considering that Tamil Nadu has a long coastline, elaborate arrangements have been made for preventing possible infiltration. State Govt has intensified security arrangements along the coastline by setting up armed check posts as well as mobile patrols. Apart from these measures, the Palk Bay is kept under continuous surveillance by Navy and Coast Guard.

The Central Government declared the LTTE as an unlawful association on 14.5.1996. This will strengthen the hands of the Central and State Governments in containing the activities of LTTE and eliminate the threat posed to the country by this organisation.

Bomb Blasts in Delhi

1174. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether foreign hand has been identified in the series of bomb blasts on the eve of elections in Kashmir valley, including the massive blasts in (i) Lajpat Nagar Market, New Delhi and (ii) a bus near Jaipur which claimed heavy toll of life;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether America and other countries condemned the perpetrators of the blasts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR): (a) and (b) The interrogation of the arrested persons in the Lajpat Nagar bomb blast case reveals that the man behind the sinister plan to cause bomb blasts in various towns in the country is based in Pakistan. He was provided RDX for the explosions by Pak ISI.

(c) The bomb blast in New Delhi was condemned by the USA. In a letter to the Prime Minister, the Ambassador of Bulgaria condemned the terrorist bomb blasts in Delhi and Rajasthan.

Communication from LTTE Representatives

1175. SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether concerned by Sri Lankan armed forces, the LTTE has stepped up its international public relations exercises with special emphasis on India;

(b) if so, any communication has been received by Government from the LTTE representatives in Sri Lanka for improvement of relations and seeking support of Government of LTTE cause; and

(c) Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): (a) Government are aware of reports of heightened propaganda exercises by LTTE and its front organisations in different parts of the world in